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ABSTRACT

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THIS DOCUMENT: Have you ever had trouble getting children to write stories? One technique that works well is group writing. (1) Divide the class into groups of five or six. (2) Give each child in a group a mimeographed copy of a story starter--just a sentence or an opening paragraph. (3) Have the children read the story starter. (4) Tell them that they are to continue the story by adding, on their copy, a sentence or two. (5) Give the children a few minutes to do this, then have them pass their papers to the child on the left. (6) Have each child read what the child before wrote and then add a sentence or two. (7) Continue to pass the stories around until each child in the group has added one or two sentences to each sheet. (As the stories get longer, more time may have to be allowed for reading and adding to the story.) (8) When it comes to the last child in the group, have that child add the ending. Story starters can follow the themes being presented in the class reader, they can be about what happens in real life, or they can be fictitious. As the children gain confidence in their writing, you can gradually extend the time, allowing 5 or 6 minutes for each child to add more than one or two sentences. Also, the groups can gradually be made smaller, working down to two children writing a story and eventually each child working alone. With this activity, the children do not feel frustrated or defeated before they begin, since they are given a beginning to a story. They think it's easy if "I only have to write one sentence," but by the time they have added one sentence to each other's stories, they have written a story themselves. They are exposed to different styles of writing and diverse thinking as they read each other's stories. Most importantly, they are not intimidated. They feel that if a mistake is made, it is not their mistake alone. Eventually, the children will not have to work in groups nor will they need the story starter, but will be able to write a story on their own. (Author)

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Story starters and group writing motivate children to write

Guadalupe Amelia Agado, *Edinburg, Texas*

Have you ever had trouble getting children to write stories? One technique that works well is group writing.

(1) Divide the class into groups of five or six.

(2) Give each child in a group a mimeographed copy of a story starter—just a sentence or an opening paragraph.

(3) Have the children read the story starter.

(4) Tell them that they are to continue the story by adding, on their copy, a sentence or two.

(5) Give the children a few minutes to do this, then have them pass their papers to the child on the left.

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Story starters can follow the themes being presented in the class reader, they can be about what happens in real life, or they can be fictitious.

As the children gain confidence in their writing, you can gradually extend the time, allowing 5 or 6 minutes for each child to add more than one or two sentences. Also, the groups can gradually be made smaller, working down to two children writing a story and eventually each child working alone.

With this activity, the children do not feel frustrated or defeated before they begin, since they are given a beginning to a story. They think it's easy if "I only have to write one sentence," but by the time they have added one sentence to each other's stories, they have written a story themselves. They are exposed to different styles of writing and diverse thinking as they read each other's stories. Most importantly, they are not intimidated. They feel that if a mistake is made, it is not their mistake alone.

Eventually, the children will not have to work in groups nor will they need the story starter, but will be able to write a story on their own.